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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Advocacy Programs Services

CRISIS MANAGEMENT & SUPPORT

Earthquake Safety at Post

Many of the buildings the Department of State owns or leases are in areas of moderate to high seismic hazard (refer to the list of posts with their associated levels of seismicity at the end of this guide). The probability of a major earthquake occurring during an individual's tour at a particular post is remote. However, it is prudent to prepare for an earthquake ahead of time when living in an area where one may occur.

The purpose of this guide is to provide you with some tips on how you can better prepare for and react during and after an earthquake. The need for personal preparedness cannot be overemphasized. Updating or establishing an "earthquake kit" will help employees and their families cope before and in the aftermath of a major earthquake. Simple and inexpensive things you can do now will help reduce injuries and protect belongings.

Before an Earthquake

The first step is to look around your home and identify all unsecured objects that might fall during shaking. **START NOW** by moving heavy furniture, such as bookcases, away from beds, couches, and other places where people sit or sleep. Also make sure that exit paths are clear of clutter. The following are things you can do to protect yourself, your family, and your property in the event of an earthquake.

Things to discuss with your GSO or Facilities Maintenance Engineer at post:

- Repair defective electrical wiring, leaky gas lines, and inflexible utility connections. Work with GSO and Facilities to make timely repairs. Encourage GSO/Facilities Maintenance to install flexible pipe fittings to avoid gas or water leaks. Flexible fittings are more resistant to breakage.
- Never work on gas or electrical lines yourself.
- Ask Facilities to bolt down and secure to the wall your water heater, refrigerator, furnace, and gas appliances. If recommended by Facilities, have an automatic gas shut-off valve installed that is triggered by strong vibrations.
- Make sure all overhead lighting fixtures are anchored.

Things you can do:

- Place large or heavy objects on lower shelves. Fasten shelves, mirrors, and large picture frames to walls. Brace high and top-heavy objects.
- Store bottled foods, glass, china, and other breakables on low shelves or in cabinets that fasten shut.
- Use putty or quake gel to secure decorative bowls and objects to shelves.
- Buy earthquake safety straps, fasteners, and adhesives you can easily use to secure your belongings.
- Provide stops, bumpers, or snubbers to limit the range of movement if the item is on vibration isolators or can slide or swing.

- Hold earthquake drills with your family members: Drop, cover, and hold on!
- Locate safe spots in each room under a sturdy table or against an inside wall. Reinforce and practice this plan by moving to these places during each drill.

During an Earthquake

Minimize your movements during an earthquake to a few steps to a nearby safe place. Stay indoors until the shaking has stopped and you are sure exiting is safe.

If you are indoors

- Take cover under a sturdy desk, table or bench, or against an inside wall and hold on. If there isn't a table or desk near you, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building.
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as lighting fixtures or furniture.
- Stay in bed - if you are there when the earthquake strikes - hold on and protect your head with a pillow, unless you are under a heavy light fixture that could fall. In that case, move to the nearest safe place.
- Use a doorway for shelter only if it is in close proximity to you and if you know it is a strongly supported, load-bearing doorway.
- Stay inside until shaking stops and it is safe to go outside. Most injuries during earthquakes occur when people are hit by falling objects when entering into or exiting from buildings.
- Be aware that the electricity may go out or the sprinkler systems or fire alarms may turn on.
- DO NOT use the elevators.

If you are outdoors

- Stay there.
- Move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires.

If you are in a moving vehicle

- Stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, and utility wires.
- Proceed cautiously once the earthquake has stopped, watching for road and bridge damage.

If you are trapped under debris

- Do not light a match.
- Do not move about or kick up dust.
- Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can locate you. Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort - shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

After an Earthquake

- Be prepared for aftershocks. These secondary shockwaves are usually less violent than the main quake but can be strong enough to do additional damage to weakened structures.
- Open cabinets cautiously. Beware of objects that can fall off shelves.

- Stay away from damaged areas unless your assistance has been specifically requested by police, fire, or relief organizations.
- Be aware of possible tsunamis if you live in coastal areas. These are also known as seismic sea waves (mistakenly called “tidal waves”). When local authorities issue a tsunami warning, assume that a series of dangerous waves is on the way. Stay away from the beach and try to move inland or to higher ground.

Resources

Office of Casualty Assistance

The Bureau of Human Resource’s Office of Casualty Assistance (OCA) provides administrative assistance and ongoing support following the death of a direct hire U.S. citizen Department of State employees serving abroad or their family members, and of Department of State employees in the United States. OCA also offers support to all direct hire USG employees serving overseas under Chief of Mission authority and their family members, including FSNs, and Department of State employees in the United States who are victims of terrorism, mass casualty, and certain other critical incidents resulting in injury, impairment or death. Contact: 202-736-4302; email: **OCA@state.gov**.

Work Life 4 You (Formerly IQ: Info Quest)

Work Life 4 You (WL4Y) offers 24/7 assistance to help Department of State employees and their family members locate relief organizations and other resources to assist earthquake victims. They have specialists standing by to assist you and your loved ones and have created a web page offering quick and easy access to valuable information. Website: www.worklife4you.com. For assistance logging on to the website, contact the Help Desk at 888-604-9565. For a specialist call 866-552-4748, 800-873-1322 or send an email to **Specialist@LifeCare.com**.

USAID Staff Care

USAID Staff Care ensures the wellbeing and work-life balance of USAID’s total workforce (all hiring categories) and their dependents through a range of programs and services. USAID has partnered with Federal Occupational Health to deliver a secure confidential Staff Care website that provides a central location to access the Employee Assistance / Employee Resilience Program, Wellness, Work-Life, and Child Subsidy Programs. Services are available 24/7.

Telephone: 1-877-988-7243 (toll free) or 919-645-4960

Reverse Charge Calling: +44-0-208-987-6200; website: staffcare.usaid.gov

Employee Consultation Service (ECS)

ECS is staffed by licensed clinical social workers who can provide confidential counseling to Foreign Service Officers and Civil Service employees in the Department of State. These services are offered locally and worldwide. Family members who are overseas with the Foreign Service Officer may receive assistance if their issues related to the FSO’s workplace functioning.

Telephone: 703-812-2257

Email: **MEDECS@state.gov**

Additional Resources

General:

- [Helping Children Cope with Disaster](#), a guide to help parents understand how children react to a disaster and how to respond to children of different ages in the aftermath of a tragic event
- [Coping with Traumatic Events](#), an article that can help you understand and cope with a traumatic event that is impacting your life
- [Red Cross Safe and Well Registry](#), a registry to help locate missing loved ones after an earthquake and to make communication easier after a disaster.

Earthquakes:

- [Embassy Kathmandu's website](#) includes online resources which provide additional information about earthquake preparedness.
- [U.S. Geological Survey International Programs Website](#)
- [U.S. Geological Survey Domestic Website on Earthquakes](#)

Emergency Preparedness:

- [American Red Cross](#)
- [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)
- [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\)](#)

Pet Emergency Preparedness:

- [ASPCA Disaster Preparedness](#)
- [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\): Pet and Animal Emergency Planning](#)

Level of Seismicity at Foreign Service Posts and Consular Agencies

Seismicity Level by Zone: 0-Extremely Low, 1-Low, 2A or 2B-Moderate, 3-High, 4-Very High

ABIDJAN COTE D'IVOIRE 0

ABU DHABI UNITED ARAB

EMIRATES 0

ABUJA NIGERIA 0

ACCRA GHANA 3

ADANA TURKEY 4

ADDIS ABABA ETHIOPIA 3

ALGIERS ALGERIA 3

ALMATY KAZAKHSTAN 4

AMMAN JORDAN 3

AMSTERDAM NETHERLANDS 0

ANKARA TURKEY 2B

ANTANANARIVO MADAGASCAR 0

ANTWERP BELGIUM 1

APIA WESTERN SOMOA 3

ASHGABAT TURKMENISTAN 4

ASMARA ERITREA 3

ASTANA KAZAKHSTAN 1

ASUNCION PARAGUAY 0

ATHENS GREECE 3

AUCKLAND NEW ZEALAND 2B

BAKU AZERBAIJAN 2B

BAMAKO MALI 0

BANDAR SERI BEG. BRUNEI 1

BANGKOK THAILAND 1

BANGUI CENTRAL AFRICAN REP. 0

BANJA LUKA F.Y.R.O.M. 4

BANJUL GAMBIA, THE 0

BARCELONA SPAIN 2B

BARRANQUILLA COLUMBIA 2B

BEIJING CHINA 3

BEIRUT LEBANON 3

BELFAST NORTHERN IRELAND, UK 0

BELGRADE SERBIA 2A

BELIZE CITY BELIZE 1

BERLIN GERMANY 0

BERN SWITZERLAND 2A

BISHKEK KYRGYZSTAN 4

BISSAU GUINEA-BISSAU 0

BOGATA COLUMBIA 3

BONN GERMANY 2A

BORDEAUX FRANCE 2B

BRASILIA BRAZIL 0

BRATISLOVA SLOVAK REP 2A

BRAZZAVILLE CONGO 0

BRIDGETOWN BARBADOS 3

BRUSSELS BELGIUM 1

BUCHAREST ROMANIA 3

BUDAPEST HUNGARY 2A

BUENOS AIRES ARGENTINA 0

BUJUMBURA BURUNDI 3

CAIRO EGYPT 2A
CALCUTTA INDIA 2B
CALGARY CANADA 1
CANBERRA AUSTRALIA 1
CANCUN MEXICO 0
CAPE TOWN SOUTH AFRICA 2A
CARACAS VENEZUELA 3
CASABLANCA MOROCCO 2A
CHENGDU
CHENNAI
CHINA, 2B
INDIA, 1
CHIANG MAI THAILAND 2A
CHISINAU MOLDOVA 2B
CIUDAD JUAREZ MEXICO 2A
CLUJ ROMANIA 2A
COLOMBO SRI LANKA 0
CONAKRY GUINEA 0
COPENHAGEN DENMARK 1
COTONOU BENIN 0
CURACAO NETHERLANDS ANTILLES
2A
DAKAR SENEGAL 0
DAMASCUS SYRIA 2B
DAR ES SALAAM TANZANIA 1
DHAHRAN SAUDI ARABIA 0
DHAKA BANGLADESH 3
DILI EAST TIMOR 3
DJIBOUTI DJIBOUTI 3
DOHA QATAR 0
DUBAI UNITED ARAB EMIRATES 0
DUBLIN IRELAND 0
DURBAN SOUTH AFRICA 1
DUSHANBE
DUSSELDORF
GERMANY, 1
EDINBURGH UNITED
KINGDOM, SCOT 1
FLORENCE ITALY 2A
FRANKFURT GERMANY 2A
FREETOWN SIERRA LEONE 0
FUKUOKA JAPAN 4
GABORONE BOTSWANA 0
GENEVA SWITZERLAND 2A
GEORGETOWN GUYANA 0
GUADALAJARA MEXICO 2B
GUANGZHOU CHINA 2B
GUATEMALA CITY GUATEMALA 4
GUAYAQUIL ECUADOR 3
HALIFAX CANADA 1
HAMBURG GERMANY 0
HAMILTON BERMUDA 0
HANOI VIETNAM 1
HARARE ZIMBABWE 1
HAVANA CUBA 1
HELSINKI FINLAND 1
HERMOSILLO MEXICO 2B
HO CHI MINH CITY VIETNAM 1

HONG KONG HONG KONG 2B
ISLAMABAD PAKISTAN 3
ISTANBUL TURKEY 4
JAKARTA INDONESIA 3
JEDDAH SAUDI ARABIA 2A
JERUSALEM ISRAEL 3
JOHANNESBURG SOUTH
AFRICA 2B
KAMPALA UGANDA 2A
KARACHI PAKISTAN 2B
KATHMANDU NEPAL 3
KHARTOUM SUDAN 2A
KIEV UKRAINE 1
KIGALI RWANDA 2B
KINGSTON JAMAICA 4
KINSHASA ZAIRE 0
KOLONIA MICRONESIA 1
KOROR PALU 2B
KRAKOW POLAND 2A
KUALA LUMPUR MALAYSIA 1
KUWAIT, KUWAIT 1
LA PAZ BOLIVIA 2A
LAGOS NIGERIA 0
LAHORE PAKISTAN 2B
LEIPZIG GERMANY 2A
LIBREVILLE GABON 0
LILONGWE MALAWI 2B
LIMA PERU 4
LISBON PORTUGAL 2B
LJUBLJANA SLOVENIA 3
LOME TOGO 1
LONDON UNITED KINGDOM 1
LUANDA ANGOLA 0
LUSAKA ZAMBIA 2A
LUXEMBOURG LUXEMBOURG 1
LYON FRANCE 1
MADRID SPAIN 0
MAJURO MARSHALL ISLANDS 0
MANAGUA NICARAGUA 4
MANAMA BAHRAIN 0
MANILA PHILIPPINES 4
MAPUTO MOZAMBIQUE 1
MARSEILLE FRANCE 2B
MASERU LESOTHO 2A
MATAMOROS MEXICO 0
MBABANE SWAZILAND 2A
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA 1
MERIDA MEXICO 0
MEXICO CITY MEXICO 3
MILAN ITALY 2B
MINSK BELARUS 0
MOGADISHU SOMALIA 0
MONROVIA LIBERIA 1
MONTERREY MEXICO 1
MONTEVIDEO URUGUAY 0
MONTREAL CANADA 2B
MOSCOW RUSSIA 0
MOSTAR

MUMBAI
F.Y.R.O.M.
INDIA 2B, 2B
MUNICH GERMANY 1
MUSCAT OMAN 2A
N'DJAMENA CHAD 0
NAGOYA JAPAN 4
NAHA JAPAN 3
NAIROBI KENYA 2A
NAPLES ITALY 2B
NASSAU BAHAMAS 0
NEW DELHI INDIA 2B
NIAMEY NIGER 0
NICOSIA CYPRUS 3
NOGALES MEXICO 1
NOUAKCHOTT MAURITANIA 0
NUEVO LAREDO MEXICO 0
OSAKA-KOBE JAPAN 4
OSLO NORWAY 2B
OTTAWA CANADA 2B
OUAGADOUGOU BURKINA FASO 0
P'YONYANG NORTH KOREA 2A
PANAMA CITY PANAMA 2B
PARAMARIBO SURINAME 0
PARIS FRANCE 0
PERTH AUSTRALIA 1
PESHAWAR PAKISTAN 3
PHNOM PENH CAMBODIA 1
PONTA DELGADA PORTUGAL 2B
PORT AU PRINCE HAITI 3
PORT LOUIS MAURITIUS 0
PORT MORESBY PAPUA NEW
GUINEA 3
PORT OF SPAIN TRINIDAD &
TOBAGO 3
PRAGUE CZECH REPUBLIC 1
PRAIA CAPE VERDE 0
PRETORIA SOUTH AFRICA 2B
PRISTINA SERBIA-MONTENEGRO
(KOSOVO) 2B
PUSAN SOUTH KOREA 2A
QUEBEC CANADA 2B
QUITO ECUADOR 3
RABAT MOROCCO 2A
RANGOON BURMA 3
RECIFE BRAZIL 0
REYKJAVIK ICELAND 3
RIGA LATVIA 1
RIO DE JANEIRO BRAZIL 0
RIYADH SAUDI ARABIA 0
ROME ITALY 2B
SAN JOSE COSTA RICA 3
SAN SALVADOR EL SALVADOR 4
SANAA YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC 3
SANTO CRUZ BOLIVIA 2B
SANTIAGO CHILE 4
SANTO DOMINGO DOMINICAN
REPUBLIC 3

SAO PAULO BRAZIL 1
SAPPORO JAPAN 4
SARAJEVO BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA
2B
SEOUL SOUTH KOREA 2A
SHANGHAI CHINA 2A
SHENYANG CHINA 2B
SINGAPORE SINGAPORE 1
SKOPJE F.Y.R.O.M. 3
SOFIA BULGARIA 3
SPLIT F.Y.R.O.M. 3
ST. GEORGES GRENADA 3
ST. PETERSBURG RUSSIA 0
STOCKHOLM SWEDEN 0
STRASBOURG FRANCE 2A
SURABAYA INDONESIA 3
SUVA FIJI 3
SYDNEY AUSTRALIA 1
TAIPEI TAIWAN 4
TALLINN ESTONIA 1
TAJIKISTAN, 4

TASHKENT,
UZBEKISTAN 4
TBILISI GEORGIA 2B
TEGUCIGALPA HONDURAS 3
TEL AVIV ISRAEL 2B
THE HAGUE NETHERLANDS 0
THESSALONIKI GREECE 3
TIJUANA MEXICO 4
TIRANA ALBANIA 3
TOKYO JAPAN 4
TORONTO CANADA 1
TUNIS TUNISIA 3
ULAANBAATAR MONGOLIA 1
VALLETTA MALTA 2A
VANCOUVER CANADA 3
VATICAN CITY HOLY SEE, THE 2B
VIENNA AUSTRIA 2B
VIENTIANE LAOS 1
VILNIUS LITHUANIA 0
VLADIVOSTOK RUSSIA 1
WARSAW POLAND 1
WELLINGTON NEW ZEALAND 4
WINDHOEK NAMIBIA 0
YAOUNDE CAMEROON 0
YEKATERINBURG RUSSIA 1
YEREVAN ARMENIA 2
ZAGREB CROATIA 3